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Country - Western Europe/Austria

Subject - Lack of Sovmat Merchandise/Visit to Viennese Co-operative/Abundance of Cashmere

Place Acquired - Vienna

Date Acquired - June 1953

25X1X6

Date of Information - June 1953

Source Description -

1. I made a point of searching for Soviet manufactured merchandise but brought back nothing. Much of the consumer goods was from Satellite countries, all clearly marked. One can only conclude that only Satellite merchandise is used for export and that the Soviet goods are for Soviet consumption only.
2. In Vienna we went to the Soviet sector and visited a large co-operative store, comparable to nothing we have in the USA. A 'shanty-town' general store would be as close as I could get to describing it, and that isn't apt because anywhere in the USA there would be some variety of products as well as colorful merchandise. In the Vienna co-op, all was drab and dingy. Meat was displayed right next to the textile goods.
3. The textiles I concluded must have been of Soviet manufacture. There were no markings as to country of manufacture, but inasmuch as Satellite products had been carefully marked, the lack of markings in this case made me guess they were Soviet products. The clerks were uncommunicative, would not state prices or give any information. Of course they knew I was an American and seemed to resent our interest in their shoddy stuff.
4. One small item of interest. In the Western sectors of Vienna there is a large manufacturing plant which processes cashmere, unquestionably from the USSR, and probably of Chinese origin. No other manufacturer has so much of it.

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